Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 205115
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY D/LOS:FSMHODSOLL
APPROVED BY D/LOS:FSMHODSOLL
S/AR:ELRICHARDSON
L/OES:BHOXMAN
EB/ORF/ICD/MEYER
OES/OFA/OCA:JBROWN
S/S JSTHYDEN
----------082740 270507Z /21
R 260106Z AUG 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 205115

STADIS //
EXDIS, FOR AMBASSADOR FROM RICHARDSON

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PLOS

SUBJECT: LOS: AMERASINGHE

REF: (A) COLOMBO 3009; (B) COLOMBO 3052

1. I VERY MUCH APPRECIATE REFTELS IN PROMPT RESPONSE TO OUR INQUIRY. WE HAVE REVIEWED WITHIN DEPARTMENT POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF AMERASINGHE EITHER NOT BEING ABLE TO CONTINUE OR BECOMING SEVERELY WEAKENED IN CONTINUING AS LOS CONFERENCE PRESIDENT. ON BALANCE, WE BELIEVE CONTINUED AMERASINGHE LEADERSHIP IN LOS CONFERENCE HIGHLY DESIRABLE.

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2. PRIOR TO RECEIPT OF REFTEL (B) REPORTING YOUR CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER, WE WERE CONSIDERING ASKING YOU TO DELIVER ORALLY PERSONAL MESSAGE TO AMERASINGHE FROM ME ASKING HIM WHETHER THERE WAS ANYTHING WE COULD DO TO ASSIST HIM IN STAYING ON AS CONFERENCE PRESIDENT. PURPOSE OF ASKING AMERASINGHE WAS TO ASSURE WE GOT FULL CREDIT FOR ANY SUCH EFFORT. IN LIGHT OF REFTEL (B) AND YOUR CONVERSATION

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WITH PRIME MINISTER, HIGH LEVEL DEMARCHE IS PROBABLY NOT NECESSARY AT THIS TIME, ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT STILL BE WORTH-WHILE TO GET CREDIT WITH AMERASINGHE FOR OUR CONCERN.

3. ANOTHER QUESTION THAT ARISES AS A RESULT OF REFTEL (B) IS WHETHER THE PRIME MINISTER.S REFERENCE TO "MARCH" IN PARA 1 IS TO THE MONTH OF MARCH OR THE MARCH SESSION OF THE LOS CONFERENCE (PROPOSED FROM MARCH 28 THROUGH MAY Y2 WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF EXTENSION THROUGH MAY I9). IF THE FORMER, WE WILL PROBABLY WISH TO WEIGH IN WITH PM TO KEEP AMERASINGHE AS SRI LANKA UN PERMREP OR POSSIBLY APPOINT HIM AS REPLACEMENT FOR PINTO AS LOS REP SO THAT HIS CON-TINUATION AS CONFERENCE PRESIDENT THROUGH THE SESSION, WHICH WE BELIEVE WILL PROBABLY BE THE LAST ONE OF SUBSTAN-TIVE SIGNIFICANCE, WILL NOT BE JEOPARDIZED OR WEAKENED. (FYI: WE MUST BE CAREFUL NOT REPEAT NOT TO CONVEY THE IMPLICATION THAT THE CONFERENCE MIGHT DRAG ON BEYOND THE NEXT SESSION EXCEPT FOR MINOR DRAFTING AND A SIGNING CEREMONY. END FYI.)

4. GIVEN ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS, I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR CONVEYING TO AMERASINGHE THAT, BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH ME, YOU HAVE RAISED WITH PM OUR HOPE THAT AMERASINGHE CAN CONTINUE AS CHAIRMAN OF LOS CONFERENCE, AND THAT IT IS MY VIEW THAT REMAINING CHANCES OF CONFERENCE SUCCESS DEPEND ON AMERASINGHE.S LEADERSHIP WHATEVER MAY BE THE CONFIDENTIAL

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OUTCOME OF U.S. POLICY REVIEW. WE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE YOUR ADVICE AS TO WHETHER PARA I REFTEL (B) MEANS THROUGH THE MONTH OF MARCH OR THROUGH THE MARCH-MAY I978 SESSION.

5. YOU SHOULD BE AWARE, AND MAY WISH TO PASS ON TO AMERASINGHE, THAT PUBLIC SPECULATION IN US ON AMERASINGHE.S FUTURE HAS ALREADY BEGUN. AUGUST 22 EDITION OF OCEAN SCIENCE NEWS (WASHINGTON BASED NEWSLETTER ON OCEANS MATTERS) STATES: QTE AS REPORTED IN OSN (15 AUG) THE PRESIDENT OF UNCLOS WILL BE REPLACED AS HIS COUNTRY.S AMBASSADOR TO THE UN. THE LEADER OF THE NEWLY ELECTED UNITED NATIONAL PARTY OF SRI LANKA, J.R. JAYAWARDENA, IS SENDING A FORMER JOURNALIST AND PUBLISHER (INCLUDING TWO ENGLISH-SPEAKING DAILIES) TO NEW YORK CITY AS AMBASSADOR. ESMUND WILKREMASINGHE IS EXPECTED TO REPLACE H.S. AMERASINGHE AS AMBASSADOR WHEN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPENS ITS NEW SESSION ON 20 SEP. WHILE SRI LANKA MAY ARGUE THAT THE PRESIDENCY OF THE UN CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA IS AN QTE ASIAN ASSIGNMENT UNQTE -- THE CHAIRMANSHIPS OF THE THREE COMMITTEES OF UNCLOS WERE DIVIDED GEOGRAPH-ICALLY -- IT IS BELIEVED THAT RULE 11 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE CONFERENCE WILL PREVAIL, AND THAT AN

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ELECTION WILL BE HELD FOR A NEW UNCLOS PRESIDENT.
APPARENTLY, THE ONLY THING THAT CAN PREVENT THE TRAUMA OF
AN ELECTION IS A DECISION BY THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN SRI
LANKA TO KEEP AMERASINGHE ON AS LESS THAN A FULL-FLEDGED
AMBASSADOR, BUT WITH ENOUGH STATURE (AND FRINGE BENEFITS)
TO ALLOW HIM TO REMAIN AS PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE.
UNQTE. CHRISTOPHER

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